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# GULL

BULLETIN

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER, 1921

NUMBER 12

**DECEMBER MEETING:** The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 8th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner McAllister and Larkin Sts. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

Miss Loriol M. V. Lamoureux will address the meeting on the subject, "Boy Blue and His Friends," recounting her experiences with various African species. Visitors will be welcomed.

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**DECEMBER FIELD TRIP** will be taken to Golden Gate Park on Sunday, December 11th. Meet at 43d Avenue entrance on Fulton Street at 9:30 a. m. Take McAllister car No. 5, "Beach" sign. Bring lunch.

The usual route will be followed, ending at the Japanese tea garden, where lunch will be eaten in time to attend the lecture at the Academy of Sciences at 3:00 p. m. Leader, Miss Amy E. Gunn.

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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING:** The fifty-eighth regular meeting of the Association was held on November 10th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Miss Ames, Recording Secretary; twenty-one members and eight guests present.

Miss Ames offered an additional note for the October field trip, to the effect that the swarm of red-winged blackbirds which came to the Lake Merced tules to roost were of the tricolored species.

Following the brief business session, Mrs. Amelia S. Allen, Secretary of the Cooper Ornithological Club, entertained the members with an account of several seasons' observations in the vicinity of Boulder Creek, in the Santa Cruz mountains. Some fifty-five species were met in the course of a six-weeks' stay, and in one season, eleven nests of the black-throated gray warbler were located within a distance of two miles in the valley. Many interesting notes were taken on the conduct of the water ouzels.

In 1920, an Allen hummer nested at the corner of the sleeping porch and brought off two young birds. Shortly after they were hatched, the nest was found torn loose and hanging with the babies inside and the mother gone. The nest was restored and watched for the rest of the day, but no sign given of the mother thereafter. Mrs. Allen then bethought herself of another hummer's nest not far away and a visit showed that the two eggs therein had not yet hatched. With the thought that two birds in hand were more precious than two in the shell, the eggs were removed during the absence of the mother and the nestlings put in their place. The shock suffered by the returning mother was quite obvious, but it was succeeded by a feeling of lofty pride in her own achievements, for she must have felt that she held the hatching record in her class. She soon brooded the changelings and proceeded to hustle food for them.

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Mrs. Allen's remarks furnished subjects for an interesting discussion, and the meeting expressed its appreciation of her entertaining address. Following adjournment, the Board of Directors elected to membership Miss Emma Clark, Berkeley, and Miss C. A. Valentino, San Francisco.

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### AQUATIC WINTER VISITANTS TO LAKE MERRITT, OAKLAND, CALIF.

Ten or eleven species of duck may be found on the lake at one time or another, each year, and several more species, sporadically. The proportions of the different species are variable, but pintails, canvas-backs, baldpates and ruddys furnish the largest aggregations each season. On January 17, 1918, of about 3300 birds, the proportions were: pintails, 27%; baldpates, 15%; canvas-backs, 18%; ruddys, 18%; shovellers, 8%. On January 11, 1920, of about 5000 total, were: pintails, 25%; baldpates, 7%; canvas-backs, 42%; ruddys, 2%; shovellers, 7%; scaups, 7%. On November 6, 1921, pintails, ruddys and scaups furnished numbers far in excess of any other species, and the ruddys were nearly if not quite as numerous as the pintails. At this time, too, there was an unusually large number of mallards on the lake, twenty or more, whereas during many seasons not more than two have been found at any time. The canvas-backs were comparatively few in number.

Field identification data and distinctions are given below for ducks and other water birds which may be expected on the lake during the shooting and feeding season. Full descriptions of adult gulls will be found in *THE GULL* for May, 1921. Very complete treatment of game species will be found in "The Game Birds of California," by Messrs. Grinnell, Bryant and Storer. University of California Press. Berkeley, 1918.

**Western Grebe.** *Aechmophorus occidentalis.* 24 to 29-in. Forehead, dark ash. Top of head, line down back of neck, and upper parts of body, blackish in summer; more gray in winter. Balance of head and neck, and under parts, pure white, with satiny gloss. Bill, 3-in. long, slender and sharp. Iris, reddish orange, pink or carmine, with white ring. Neck nearly as long as body. Floats with body very low in water.

**Eared Grebe.** *Colymbus nigricollis californicus.* 12 to 14-in. Winter plumage similar to preceding. Bill, 1-in. long, slender and sharp. Iris, scarlet. Neck shorter in proportion and not so purely white as preceding.

**Pied-Billed Grebe.** *Podilymbus podiceps.* 12 to 15-in. In winter, all parts above water, dusky brown with a mottled effect. Lower belly, grayish. Other underparts, silky white. Bill, seven-eighths-inch long, stout, deep and blunt, with partial subterminal black band. Iris, brown and white.

Eared and pied-billed grebes are very common on the lake; western grebes, rare. The three species are readily distinguishable with the aid of above descriptions. At a considerable distance, the large western grebe might be confounded with another occasional visitant, a cormorant, if the light were unfavorable, but the latter bird would be black all over, and the lower mandible is strongly hooked. Female cormorants have more or less dusky or brownish coloration on neck and lower parts.

**Gulls.** The glaucous-winged adults with their soft gray mantles, free from any spot of black, and the young ones, mottled all over in pale brown colors, are often to be met. Likewise, the pretty little Bonapartes, in their winter garb, with the telltale dark spots back of the eyes. The Californias furnish far the greater number of this sort of visitor.

**Mallard.** *Anas platyrhynchos.* 24 to 25-in. Male: head and neck metallic green, with blue and purple iridescence; incomplete narrow white ring at base of green, separating it from deep chestnut breast; sides and abdomen, silvery gray with dusky markings; tail feathers white, with black above and below; speculum, violet, with white borders front and back. Female: general color-

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ation, brown with pale edges to feathers; head and neck paler and throat approaching buff; speculum, same as male; dark line through eye and quizzical expression of face. Immature males in November closely resemble females, but much darker, and careful observation will disclose development of green on head and neck and purplish chestnut on breast.

**Baldpate.** *Mareca americana.* 19 to 21-in. Male: forehead, crown and back of head, white; broad streak of metallic green around and back from each eye to back of neck; rest of head and neck, whitish, thickly speckled with black or dusky; general coloration of other upper parts, brownish gray, finely barred; breast, sides and flanks pinkish brown; under parts whitish, or rusty; speculum, metallic green, with black edge above and a pure white area above that; bill, grayish blue, 1.5-in. Female: general coloration, mottled, speckled and barred brownish; more ashy on head, with dark area around eye; warmer on breast and flanks and under parts like male; speculum black or very dark green; bill like male.

In January, 1921, a freakish male had buff cheeks, without any specks. In younger males, the white on head is tinged with buff.

**European Widgeon.** *Mareca penelope.* 18 to 20-in. In January, 1921, a male of this species favored the lake with a visit. His resemblance to the male Baldpate is very close, with exception of head which is bright rufous, with light buff crown and forehead.

**Green-Winged Teal.** *Nettion carolinense.* 14 to 15-in. One of the smallest ducks. Male is readily recognized by its rich chestnut head, with metallic green patch around and back from eyes, similar to baldpate; green speculum and vertical white slash on the gray background just in front of wing; while resting, the tail is raised, making light buff under tail coverts prominent. The female is colored somewhat like female mallard, but speculum is dull green. Bill, black, 1.5-in.

**Shoveller.** *Spatula clypeata.* 17 to 21-in. Readily identified by large bill, 2.5-in. long and much wider at end than at base. Male has deep green head, broad white collar meeting rich cinnamon of under parts in a sharp line. Speculum green, with light blue patch in front of it. Female is colored somewhat like female mallard, with dull green speculum and blue patch on front of wing.

**Pintail.** *Dafila acuta.* 26 to 30-in. Readily distinguished by large size, narrow head and long, slender neck. Bill, 2-in. or more, grayish, with bluish sides. Male has head snuff colored, with green and purple iridescence; back of neck, brown; throat speckled; lower neck, breast and under parts, white, with narrow white line running up on side of neck to head. Two central tail feathers very long. Speculum, green to bronze. Female, brownish, mottled, and speculum dull brown.

**Canvas-back.** *Marila valisineria.* 20 to 24-in. Easily distinguished by silhouette alone. No apparent angle between slope of head and bill. Bill, 2.5-in. long, greenish black. Head and neck, deep rufous, shading to black on crown and at bill; broad black collar and breast; back and under parts, silvery gray to white; speculum, bluish-gray. Female: head, neck and breast, reddish brown; breast darker; back and sides, slaty brown.

**Scaup. Greater,** *Marila marila.* 19 to 20-in. **Lesser,** *Marila affinis.* 17 to 18-in. These ducks do not resemble any other common visitants, but they are not definitely distinguishable from each other in the field. Greater is less common than Lesser. Male: head, neck, collar and breast, black with iridescence more greenish in the Greater, and more purplish in the Lesser; back, white, closely barred with black; sides and flanks, more or less faintly barred. Female: general coloration, mottled brownish, with characteristic white area around base of bill. Bill is about 1.75-in. long and blue in both sexes.

**American Golden Eye.** *Clangula clangula americana.* 17 to 20-in. Of stocky build, with puffy head and short neck. Bill, dull greenish dusky, 1.5-in. Eye, golden yellow. Male: head, center of back and tail, black; other parts,

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white with sharp black markings on upper parts. Circular white spot at base of bill. Female: head, brown; white collar; other parts, slaty brown, dark above, shading to very light underneath. Speculum white in both sexes.

**Buffle-Head.** *Charitonetta albeola.* 14 to 15-in. A plump little duck with a puffy, round head. Bill, slaty, 1-in. long. A persistent diver. Speculum white. Male: head, black with white crown and patch on side, back from eye; neck, breast and sides, white. Female: grayish brown, darker above; white patch on side of head, below and back of, eye.

**White Winged Scoter.** *Oidemia deglandi.* 20 to 23-in. Not common. A thick-set, black bird, with short, stout bill, colored red and yellow and with black knob at base. Small white spot through eye and white speculum. Female: dusky brown, with dull black bill and white speculum.

**Ruddy Duck.** *Erismatura jamaicensis.* 14 to 16-in. Bill, broad, 1.7-in. long; dusky. Both sexes similar in winter; grayish brown, without speculum; top and back of head, above eye, very dark; lower part of face white in male and light brown in female. Floats low in water, with tail erect, like a wren.

**Coots.** *Fulica americana.* 14 to 16-in. Dark slate color, paler below; black on head; crissum dull whitish; bill, white, 1.5-in. long with dark, bulging frontal plate above it; very large, green, lobed feet. Spends much time grazing on lawns; quarrelsome.

A. S. KIBBE.

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**NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP** was taken on the 13th to the University Campus, Berkeley, with no good prospects for good weather, but the sun favored us later in the day. We started along the creek at Centre St. entrance and followed it up to the "bird bath" near the president's house. No birds were found using this much frequented place, probably because of the weather. The beautiful green lawn and the oak trees just east of the house were almost thronged with robins, coast jays and flickers.

After eating lunch in Faculty Glade, we followed up Strawberry creek, seeking our friend of former trips, the western winter wren. Some of the party were fortunate enough to find one, but at the Dairy barnyard we were disappointed in failing to locate a thrasher.

Birds encountered on the bay and the campus were: glaucous-winged, western, California and Bonaparte gulls; killdeer, California quail, sharp-shinned, sparrow and red-tailed hawks; red-shafted flicker, Anna hummer, black phoebe, coast and California jays; meadowlark, Brewer blackbird, purple finch, Nuttall and golden-crowned sparrows; junco, song sparrow, San Francisco and California towhees, Hutton vireo; Audubon and Townsend warblers, Vigors and western winter wrens and plain titmouse; bush-tit, wren-tit, ruby-crowned kinglet, dwarf hermit thrush and western robin. Thirty-four species.

Members in attendance were: Mesdemoiselles Ayer, Cheesman, Flynn, Fritts, King, Schroder, Sterne; Mrs. Warrington; Messrs. Rapp, Thomas and Geo. Wright. As guests, Mesdemoiselles Edith Ayer, Engebretsen, Paroni, Roe and Rappe; Mrs. C. H. Mitchell. Eleven members and six guests.

HELEN FLYNN.

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